

Volume 10, No. 17 • July 11, 2003

# Nation

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# SPEAK UP FOR THE LUBICON CREE

For the past 12 years, I've been the unofficial pastor to the Lubicon Indian people who live in Little Buffalo, some 130 km east of Peace River. And on a few occasions Lubicon Chief Bernard Ominayak has invited me to sit in on negotiations with federal and provincial government officials.

Ten years ago I was invited to a special meeting with MLA Ray Martin, the leader of the opposition at the Alberta Legislature. There I met a dozen people of all walks of life; lawyers, environmentalists, university people, the president of the Indian Association of Alberta, business people, engineers, a Mennonite minister.

Except for one man I knew, they were total strangers. I was sure that someone had made a mistake by inviting me and felt I had no business there. Martin announced that he was launching the Lubicon Settlement Commission of Review and that he was asking all of us to be members of it. Our task was "to investigate, compare, assess and report publicly the government's offer, as well as the Lubicon's comprehensive draft settlement agreement, the relative merits of each proposal and how they would allow the Lubicons to once again become economically self-sufficient."

I was more than a little shocked when out of nowhere Martin announced that I was to be the facilitator for the first meeting to be held immediately. Our task was daunting but we went to work with a series of eight public hearings held in Edmonton as well as in Little Buffalo and Peace River, so that by March 1993, we were able to table our report.

This past Christmas, I went again to celebrate Christmas Eve with the Lubicon. I took the opportunity and visited as many homes as I could in the limited time that I had. People received me warmly in the old shacks and dated trailers they call home.

Electric power is the only amenity they can claim. There is no running water anywhere in the community. Outdoor toilet facilities is the fate of all, year-round. Many houses are heated by wood they cut and a few more fortunate homes have a heater in the middle of the house.

It reminded me of our home in Donnelly in the 1940s when I was a boy. In a corner was a 40-gallon barrel in which we would haul the snow that melted as water for our various

needs. A lone electric bulb hanging from the ceiling lighted the house. Incredibly, 60 years later, the Lubicon people are living in similar conditions.

When Treaty Eight was signed in 1899, the Lubicon - who lived far from the rivers that were the highways of the time - were missed. At various times in the 1920s and '30s the Lubicon contacted the government to sign the treaty. They were recognized as a legitimate band in 1939, although no treaty was signed.

In the 1970s, it was discovered that the Lubicon people were sitting on some of the richest sub-surface resources in the world. Oil companies and forest companies moved into their traditional territory, destroying traditional Lubicon hunting and trapping economy and forcing the Lubicon onto welfare in order to survive even though these valuable natural resources rightly belong to the Lubicon by virtue of their unceded aboriginal rights.

Negotiations to settle outstanding Lubicon land rights with the federal government are ongoing - but at a snail's pace. In spite of our commission's recommendations, 11 years have gone by, with setbacks accompanied by tragedies touching many families.

The Lubicon over time invited me to sit at the negotiating table with them, which I have done on a few occasions. The impression I had was the government negotiators were dragging their feet. Travelling all the way from Ottawa to Little Buffalo they usually returned to Ottawa after a few hours at the table, instead of pursuing the issues for several days at a time and getting the job done.

As Christian people, we are called to pursue justice and fairness. The Chretien government has made many promises to the Lubicon people but has been faithful to very few.

Each of us can help the cause of justice by writing to the prime minister who has publicly stated that part of his legacy would be to solve the Lubicon issue.

Ask him to follow through on his promise and settle justly with the Lubicon people before he leaves his post as prime minister later this year. Express your concerns to: Prime Minister Jean Chretien, House of Commons, Ottawa K1A 0A6. A line or two will do. No stamp is required.

By Father Jaques Johnson, omi

Taken from an article in the  
Western Catholic Reporter

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**Festival shot  
Photographer:  
Will Nicholls  
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Mona Violette**



## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Sometimes, names can be misnomers, an accident of the tongue, a slip of the lip, a mispronunciation or misspelling. In the case of aboriginal people countrywide, names are anglicized or interpreted from their true meaning, names like Luke Warmwater.

At one time in my life, I came across a letter addressed to Ben Cowcell, who happened to live in Chisasibi, or so the envelope indicated. Ben, somehow managed to stymie even Canada Post, who, had after a number of weeks, decided to ask someone at the band office if there was anyone with that name under the employment of the council. Nope, no one had ever heard of dear old Ben.

So, we took a deep breathe and it was decided to open the letter, much to the chagrin of the postmaster, who stated that it was illegal, but the mail must be delivered, no matter what. The letter unfolded in a rather amateurish way and the writing was quite illegible. After reading the letter, we came to realize that the letter was addressed to the Band Council! So the mystery of who Ben Cowcell actually was, was solved.

Many people who were alive in the days of the Indian agent and when Indian Affairs flourished under the regime of the Indian Act, (but reserves did not), often had their names arbitrarily appointed by either the Indian Agent or the priest (or reverend), creating a whole slew of new names in a new language.

For Inuit people, who already were cast as eaters of raw meat, or Eskimos, were often just appointed a number, either starting with E or W, depending on whether they lived in the East or West. The government had Big Brother even then, many, many years before 1984. I often wondered who was given the number 1. The same

for native people, who now are identified by band number.

At some point in time, when the actual naming and numbering took place, some people had the choice as to what name they could take. Some people didn't have that choice as they lined up for their name and number and often when a group of people showed up, they were given the same last name, just to speed up the process! So some neighbors ended up with the same name, even though they were not blood related.

I recently got a hold of a copy of my birth certificate and I soon realized that the name that I thought I had, was not my real name. Again, the arbitrary misnomer was in play, and this took hold to many of my relatives, if not all of them.

I can just imagine the colorful names we had as a people, which were reduced to misspelling or misinterpretation, and the true meaning of the name lost in the red tape of the government's due process of assimilation.

I understand that many people had just one name, which changed as they grew older. I guess my name would have changed to "one who is follicle challenged" or "the nearsighted one." What ever the case may be, my name just seems to suit me, for some reason. Even children like to say my name out loud, in public places no less.

Well, all I can say is that a name is like a suit of clothes. After many years, you grow into it and when you don't like it, you can change it in a court of law. I don't think that I would ever have to change my name, nor would I ever wear it out.

It's not like Elvis, though, he is King. Whenever I can, I emphasize that I am Sidney from 9-5 and from 5-9 I'm Sonny.

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*The Nation*





## BURGLARS REALLY INTO GRAND COUNCIL OFFICES

The Montreal office of the Grand Council of the Crees suffered two burglaries in less than a week last May. According to police and the Grand Council office manager Elaine Harrison-Awashish, the break-ins don't appear to be politically motivated.

MUC Police reports say the first break-in took place on the evening of May 5 between 10 pm and 11:37pm. The front door was broken to enable the person or persons to access the offices. Three computers (a laptop and two desktops) were stolen. But there was no "mischief on the scene," the police report notes.

The thief simply grabbed computers that were visible and could quickly be taken said police. There was evidence that the other offices were checked over but the CPU's were not out in the open. Apparently, the thief had disconnected the alarm system that was installed as no alarm went off.

Office staff say they did feel a frustrated and angry. They rallied together and made do with what they could, sharing computers.

The second break-in took place over the night of May 11. This time there was no trace of a break and entry, according to police. Apparently the lock had been picked or the thief had a key. Again the alarm system had been disconnected. Within the of-

fices, one of the windows had been broken to gain access. And once again, three computers (a laptop and two CPU's) were stolen, including a very old laptop on the brink of succumbing to old age that had given to one person who had a computer stolen from the first break-in.

The offices were not ransacked and all that was stolen was the small portable CPU's and laptops. These can easily fit in a sports bag, leading police to believe that whoever committed the crime was looking for some quick cash. Three CPU's can be sold for over \$1,000. The police do not have any suspects at this point but they did say that the second break-in could have been someone who had worked there in the past or someone who had access to keys as there was no sign of forcible entry. "It's hard to say at this point. We've got investigators on the job for sure though," says Ian LaFreniere of the MUC Police.

After the second break-in, an emergency meeting was held with the Cree Construction and Development Company and high-tech security measures were put in place. Said Harrison-Awashish: "We don't foresee anyone being able to get in here without getting caught. The Grand Chief wanted to ensure that everything was done to secure the office, particularly for the safety of the employees. He

was very supportive and wanted to ensure that all of this was enacted immediately."

By tsa

## Standoff in G.W.

On June 23, 2003, police in Whapmagoostui were alerted to a disturbance involving a young man and women, who were intoxicated. The young man was carrying a rifle and police soon set up a security perimeter, effectively shutting out residents in the restricted area near the young man's home. Four hours later, he left for the hills behind his home. Police, having reportedly had confrontations with this man two years earlier in a similar incident and it involved a shootout, so chances were taken by the Whapmagoostui Police Force and the Kativik Regional Police Force.

Swat teams from Rouyn Noranda and Montreal, both of the Surete Quebec were flown in along with another investigation team. The young man eluded the police later in the day and was holed up in another residential 6 unit apartment building on the other side of town in Kuujuarapik. There the townsfolk viewed the standoff with an air festivity and spectacle, while rap music blared out from a neighboring rooftop. The only problem was related to the inconvenience of not being able to leave or enter their homes due to the security perimeter setup by local residents immediately affected by the standoff.

The SWAT teams successfully talked the young man into surrendering after a few minutes of negotiating and the situation was resolved early in the evening. At no time were the residents of Whapmagoostui and Kuujuarapik in any danger. At this time, the name of the suspect has not been released nor details of charges laid.

## Bizness as usual

The day after Canada Grand Chief Ted Moses finally had a chance to talk to Quebec premier Jean Charest. Charest quickly dispelled any notions that Moses support of Landry and the Parti Quebecois during the provincial election would have any effect on Cree/Quebec relations. Moses said Charest indicated that the Paix des braves Agreement signed last fall was something that would continue.

Charest also told Moses that they would continue to resolve disputes about the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

Moses said Charest went so far as to say that he was glad a Native leader got involved in Quebec's political arena for the first time.

Next Issue: Nemaska camp blockade and work stoppage. The full story.



LOGO

# CONTEST

NAME

The Association that will soon service the Artists and Artisans of Eeyou Istchee needs a name and a logo. We need you to send us your ideas and suggestions!

**Keep in mind that the goal of the association will be to provide support and assistance for Artists and Artisans of Eeyou Istchee.**

This association is the third of its kind emerging from section 28 of the IBNQA. This section provided for three associations being the Cree Trappers' Association (CTA), Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association (COTA) and now an

**Association for Cree Native Arts & Crafts.**



**The PRIZE for the winning LOGO is \$500 !!**

**The PRIZE for the winning NAME is \$250 !!**

Send your suggestion for a name and/or logo by phone, fax, mail or email to:

**Melisa Pash**  
**Arts & Crafts Advisor**

1100 rue de l'Escale  
Val-d'Or, Qc  
J9P 4G8

Phone: 819-874-4529  
Fax: 819-825-2145  
Email: mpash@cra.qc.ca



**Deadline July 31st, 2003 !!**

**Be sure to include your name and co-ordinates!!**







## SAGANASH BLASTS FEDS AT COMMONWEALTH

In a keynote address to an international Commonwealth indigenous peoples' summit in Georgetown, Guyana, Grand Council of the Crees' Special Envoy Romeo Saganash detailed the "gross disparities" facing aboriginal peoples across Canada, and called for the abandonment of ongoing federal policies of extinguishment of aboriginal rights.

Addressing leading indigenous peoples' organizations and governmental delegates from Commonwealth countries across the globe, Saganash condemned the federal policy of extinguishment of Aboriginal rights as leading directly to the "appalling" social conditions facing aboriginal peoples in Canada today.

The Grand Council's submission – based on analysis of all land claims agreements signed in Canada since 1975 and a number of secret Cabinet documents – established that the federal government is still aggressively extinguishing constitutionally-protected Aboriginal rights in all modern land claims agreements it signs.

Saganash pointed out that this is occurring in spite of international human rights judgments at the highest level declaring extinguishment a violation of fundamental human rights, and despite recent official representations by Canada to U.N. human rights entities that it has stopped requiring that aboriginal rights be extinguished in modern land claims agreements.

"Policies of extinguishment that are used to sanitize past injustices and dispossession will not bring about social or legal certainty," said Saganash.

"Aboriginal peoples in

Canada have learned through bitter experience that the only certainty gained through the federal government's comprehensive claims process is the lasting certainty of our continued poverty, marginalization and exclusion from the economic and political wealth now derived from our traditional lands."

The Commonwealth meeting called for an end to the "invisibility" of Indigenous Peoples in Commonwealth Americas, thus requiring the member States to give due attention to their fundamental human rights and their land and resource rights.

The delegates at the summit expressed strong concern over the ease with which countries have to this day disregarded the treaties or commitments made to them by the Crown over the centuries, including the recent past, to recognise and protect Indigenous Peoples rights to their land, resources, economies and way of life.

Even today the countries of the Commonwealth, be they "recently-independent" States or major "developed" States such as Canada and Australia, are slow to adopt appropriate measures to recognise land titles or return lands which are central to Indigenous Peoples governance and social cohesion.

The delegates also noted with concern the multiple discrimination against Indigenous women in Belize, Canada, Dominica, and Guyana, and their poor access to health care, employment opportunities, and welfare facilities.

These disadvantages prevented Indigenous women's essential role and contribution to the development processes of their communities.

Nation staff

## BC Natives want inquiry into police neglect

Native leaders in British Columbia are calling for a public inquiry into the death of Frank Paul after the release of disturbing video footage showing his last hours alive.

Chief Edward John of the B.C. First Nations Summit said the jailhouse tape troubles him. It shows Paul being dragged by prison officials out of Vancouver jail to a police wagon.

He died of hypothermia hours later after police allegedly dumped him in an alley drunk and soaking wet. John said Paul was treated with an appalling lack of compassion.

"In this day and age, no matter who the person is, no matter what colour their skin, they should never be brought on to the street and . . . left to die."

The head of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs said he too supports a public airing of the Paul affair. Chief Stewart Phillip said the case raises the ugly spectre of racism still prevalent in too many Canadian police forces.

"Various policing agencies across the country have been taken to task for their very brutal treatment of First Nations people," he said.

He said the Paul case is reminiscent of others in Saskatchewan, where police drove and dumped native men on the outskirts of town in freezing temperatures.

"There's no place for that attitude in this country and it's got to be stopped. And the only way . . . is to bring public attention to bear."

Source: Vancouver Province

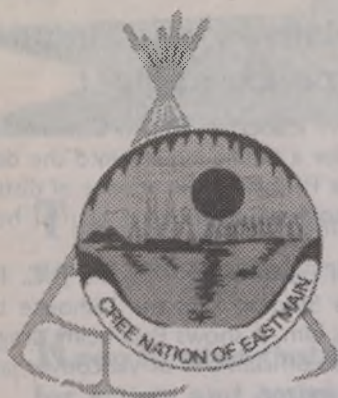
## AFN unable to work with gov't: Nault

Indian Affairs Minister Robert Nault called the Assembly of First Nations ineffective and irrelevant last week, an attack that comes less than a month before the organization chooses a leader.

"The AFN is structurally incapable of working with the government, at least the way it's organized now," Nault said at a meeting of the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix* editorial board.

The comments drew a quick response from AFN National Chief Matthew Coon Come. In a statement, he said Nault's words are surprising not only because of their disrespectful and dismissive nature towards a representative organization but because they fly in the face of his state-





**Cree Nation of Eastmain**

# **6th Annual Golf Tournament August 1st, 2003**

**Le Golf du Belvedere in Val D'Or**

## **Wachiya!**

On behalf of the Cree Nation of Eastmain we wish to take the opportunity to congratulate you on the success of the past golf tournament, it is at these occasions that we see the enthusiasm of working together to build a better relationship.

It is with great pleasure that we invite you to the Cree Nation of Eastmain's 6th Annual Golf Tournament to be held on Friday August 1, 2003 at Le Golf du Belvedere in Val d'Or.

**12:00 pm Tee Off Start  
Join Us for a day of Golf**

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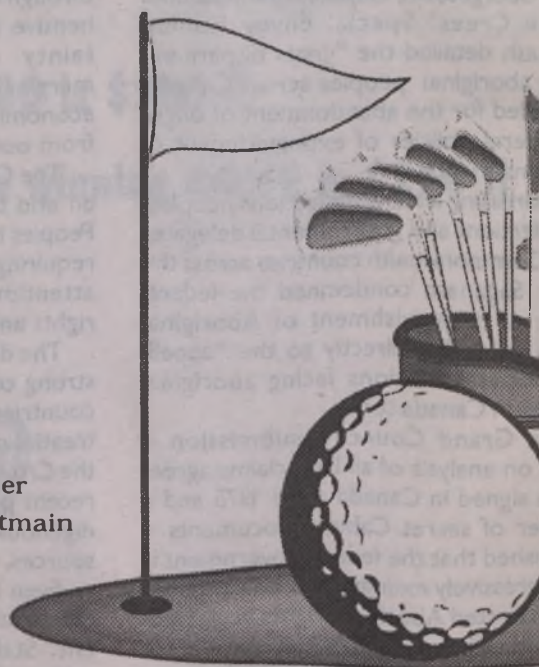
Tel: 819-874-5151

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### **Marc Antione Trahan**

Tel: 819-824-2711

Fax: 819-825-2145





ments in a letter sent to the AFN on June 18, in which he acknowledges "...our (the federal government's) belief in the positive contributions the AFN has made in Aboriginal affairs."

When questioning the AFN's structural capability, Coon Come added, Nault neglects the fact that the Assembly of First Nations is essentially organized in accordance with federal law, the Indian Act, which recognizes bands led by Chiefs.

"If he sees the structure as outdated or ineffectual," said Coon Come, "then the Minister must realize that the structure is, in part at least, a reflection of a failure of federal law and policy to recognize that First Nations were traditionally organized as nations or as signatories to Treaties with the Crown."

And Coon Come wonders whether it is impossible for government to work with the Assembly and individual First Nations, or is it impossible for this specific minister? The Minister says, "My advice to the AFN and the leadership is to send somebody we can work with around the table ...". The Minister is speaking with forked tongue. By letter (June 18th) the Minister stated, "It remains our position to not become involved in political activities, surrounding the AFN leadership race. The position of INAC and our government is clear in respect of the role of the Assembly of First Nations: we want to work with the AFN, in partnership with its leadership. We seek to do so in the spirit of co-operation and collaboration as the preferred mode of operation." The Minister's mandate is to administer the Indian Act and Indian Affairs, but does not include interfering in the internal and leadership business of the AFN.

## New prison will address aboriginal problems

Saskatchewan's first federal minimum security penitentiary for aboriginal men is officially open.

The Willow Cree Healing Lodge on the Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation Reserve aims to prepare offenders for reintegration into society through Native spiritual and cultural interventions.

It's been about 15 years in the making, and officials say the lodge can address the disproportionate number of aboriginal people incarcerated in federal prisons.

According to the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), 39 per cent of federal offenders in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the North West Territories and northwestern Ontario are of aboriginal

descent.

The goal is to help offenders become law-abiding, productive citizens. "We have a vision of creating a healthy aboriginal community," said Garnet Eyahpaise, chief of Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation.

Solicitor general of Canada Wayne Easter and commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), Lucie McClung, oversaw the opening ceremony.

Drums pounded and aboriginal dancers led the dignitaries in a grand march after a traditional pipe ceremony. Elders, veterans, and First Nations leaders also took part in the event at the 40-bed facility, located on a 30-hectare area 90 kilometres north of Saskatoon, near Duck Lake.

"We know the jails are filled by our people," said Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde, during the ceremony. "That's not right," he said, adding high social costs will continue is the existing situation isn't corrected. "There need to be a change in that justice system."

A similar facility for women in Saskatchewan houses 28 women on the Nekenet First Nation in the Cypress Hills. A healing lodge for 60 male offenders is located near Hobbema, Alta., on the Samson Cree Nation.

## Opposition brewing to Manitoba's urban reserves

Winnipeg Mayor Glen Murray says that urban aboriginal reserves are "the best hope we have" of reversing native poverty in Winnipeg, but already opposition is brewing. Murray dismissed charges that urban reserves amount to a "city-within-a-city" that don't pay taxes or follow city rules.

"Reserve is such a loaded term. The image is a poor northern reserve with few resources," said Murray. "What we're talking about is commercial property investment."

Urban reserves are one of 15 ideas floated in the city's draft urban aboriginal strategy, which will be circulated among native leaders and councillors for comment later this summer.

Urban reserves, common in Saskatchewan, are formed through the Treaty Land Entitlement process, where the federal government makes good on land promises made to first nations in old treaties. Instead of expanding rural reserves, which have few options for economic development, bands can use federal cash to buy

land in town to set up commercial ventures.

Murray said that could mean everything from training centres, artists' studios, student housing, health clinics, eco-tourism offices or small businesses.

Several Manitoba bands are exploring the possibility of setting up an urban reserve, but negotiations are still in the backroom stages.

The same rules set out in the federal Indian Act that apply to rural reserves also apply to urban reserves, including tax exemption.

The reserve and whatever development goes on it must conform to city zoning but doesn't technically pay property taxes to the city. Instead, the band pays a fee to the city for water, police and other services. The fee amounts to what a private landowner would pay in property taxes.

Because most status Indians living or working on reserves are immune from sales and income taxes, critics such as the Canadian Taxpayers Federation fear aboriginal-run commercial ventures would have an unfair advantage over non-aboriginal businesses.

"It's another form of race-based taxation, and it creates a non-level playing field," said CTF Manitoba director Adrienne Batra. "We believe aboriginals must be included in the economy and the only way to do that is for everyone to be treated equally."

But, Dennis White Bird, grand chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, said aboriginals have been condemned to the margins of the economy for decades, and he dismissed the notion that tax exemptions guaranteed in treaties and legislation are unjust.

If an urban reserve is created, White Bird would like to see the many tribal and first nation government offices consolidated there, especially if aboriginals take on more responsibility for social services and health.

*Letters Policy: All letters must be received one week previous to printing of the Nation to be considered for publication. The Nation reserves the right to edit, modify or reject letters. Letters should be addressed to the Editor in Chief. Mailing address can be found on this page near the bottom of the masthead.*



# Cree social work pioneers earn first (and perhaps last) university degrees

By tsa



*"Education doesn't make you happy, nor does freedom. We don't become happy just because we're free, if we are, or because we've been educated, if we have. Education may be the means by which we realize we are happy. Education opens our eyes and our ears, it tells us where delights are lurking. It convinces us that there is only one freedom of any importance what-so-ever: that of the mind. And it gives us the assurance, the confidence, to walk the path our mind, our educated mind, offers."*

From the movie *Iris*, based on the life of writer/philosopher Iris Murdoch

On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 41 students from the nine Cree communities walked across the stage and received their baccalaureate of Social Work (BSW) in Val d'Or. It was the crowning result of seven years of dedication and hard work. These 41 students managed to not only complete their coursework for the program, but many of them did it while holding down a full time job and managing a family.

This one-time program was unique in Quebec and Canada, as it was developed in conjunction with the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT). What originally started out as a certificate program for some of the workers at the CLSC became a fully accredited Bachelor of Social Work program in which Cree-oriented courses were offered in the Cree communities.

Social Work is both the art and the science of providing services designed to assist people individually and in relationship to their environment. Social workers work directly with those who

are homeless, unemployed, have physical or mental disabilities, are from broken families, who are victims of violence or offenders; all regardless of age. It is a profession committed to the improvement of the quality of life for individuals, families, communities and society.

But while there are Native Social Work programs available elsewhere in Canada, this was the only one in Quebec to address the specific needs of a Native population. And after these 41 grads, there are no more plans to implement a curriculum that takes the cultural and traditional aspects of a Native population into account.

The UQAT BSW program came about thanks in some part to the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) in 1975. This allowed the Cree to create the Cree Board of Health and Social Services (CBHSS) and allowed them to take control over the social services within the communities.

While there have always been "natural helpers" living in the communities to respond to the social service needs of the children, they relied mainly on the time-tested modes of discipline and caring. It became apparent however, that the helpers were not trained for the kind of work that was a result of the fallout from the years of abuse in the residential schools and the erosion of the traditional way of life. The children required more than discipline; it was understood that they required psychosocial care.

In 1994 young people in crisis were referred to the Centre D'orientation L'etape in Val d'Or. There were no reception cen-





tres in the Cree communities that could offer the services that were needed. The CBHSS was working on transferring rehabilitation services to Mistissini with the intent of establishing a Reception Centre there. However, the Minister of Health and Social Services of Quebec (MSSSQ) at the time still had jurisdiction over the Cree Board, and required all the workers to follow a training program in order to proceed with the takeover of the services.

So they called upon UQAT to develop a curriculum in psycho-education – towards a certificate for the Cree Nation. They chose UQAT because it would allow them to develop a Cree-oriented curriculum that would let the students remain at their jobs while completing the requirements for the degree.

In 1995 an advisory committee was set up comprised of different stakeholders from both UQAT and the CBHSS. The mandate for the curriculum was to meet the needs in both psycho-education and social work. This was to allow the students to acquire the skills to cope with the hardships related to psychosocial intervention in small communities. The workers experience additional stress due to the fact that they often have to intervene with people from their own social or family network. The curriculum also had to meet the requirements of the MSSSQ in order to proceed with the opening of the Reception Centre.

What resulted was recognition of the need for a Bachelors degree in psychosocial intervention by accumulation of certificates: in psycho-education, social work and specific psychosocial issues in the Cree communities. In the end, a simple reorganization of the UQAT baccalaureate already offered would meet their objectives.

A support team was set up consisting of Caroline Oblin, Bella Petawabano and Gale Cyr, who helped in the development of the

course content and the cultural transfer of learning objectives for each course. The general objectives of the UQAT social work degree remained the same, but the learning contents and methods were adapted to an Aboriginal perspective of decolonisation. The teaching methods were consistent with Aboriginal customs. The courses promoted interactivity within discussion, healing circles, sweat lodges and other ceremonies. The students became teachers and vice versa.

It was aimed at “learning to listen and listening to learn,” says Gale Cyr, the head of the program. She says the program was based in large extent on Aboriginal holistic thinking whereby all things are related according to the four directions: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. The students had to complete extensive self-analysis by examining their values, stereotypes, prejudices and the effects of colonization in their communities that affect them.

The program worked in a decentralized manner, whereby courses were held four times a year in the Cree communities. For 12 days the students would converge in the specified community and attend school seven hours a day. During this time they would complete the intensified coursework and do the required assignments. The students also went to Val d’Or and Rouyn Noranda for courses and to use the library. In total, it took the students seven years to complete the program. It was a long haul with many personal sacrifices and much determination and patience, not only on the part of the students but also the families.

The students were organized though, and kept busy during their off-study time while they were away. They were encouraged and funded by UQAT to establish a Student’s Council. Meetings were held on a regular basis where the students could express their concerns and needs, which were then shared with the CBHSS and UQAT. Social activities were held as well, consisting of vol-





offered a permanent job, so I'm looking forward to that. If there's another course, like a Master's Degree, I'll do that."

Bella Hester of Waskaganish had been working in the local CHBSS Youth Protection Department when the chance arose. "It was an opportunity to continue my education," she said. "Plus we got to see all the communities. I really liked the Native content and the native teachers; it helped me to grasp it better, to understand it all. The best part about it was just being together as a group, relying on each other. We're all linked together now."

The future of the program is uncertain. A clause in the JBNQA prevents the Cree School Board from committing any funds to post secondary education that takes place in the community, so only students who leave the community can receive funding. There was plenty of funding from the CHBSS, UQAT, the MEQ (Ministry of Education of Quebec), the nine band councils and the CRA Grand Council. This program was offered at no cost to the students. The tuition, travel, housing and food expenses were taken care of. The CHBSS is hoping to continue some kind of program, perhaps even offering a Master's program if the logistics and funding can be figured out.

In any case, a big thank-you also goes out to those Cree entities that gave their financial support to make this program a reality. A thank-you also goes to the MEQ and UQAT for their support. A very well earned congratulations to the 41 students who graduated, with a special thank-you to their families for the support. May you have the courage to walk the path your educated mind chooses.

leyball, basketball games, snowmobiling, lots of feasts and other cultural activities.

Student Council President Edith Gull of Waswanipi was working at the local CHBSS when the program started up. "I felt I needed to learn more and add more knowledge for my work, expand my learning," she said. "I couldn't see myself going out of the community to do the BSW. It was a good experience to do it this way. I went to Montreal and Ottawa years ago to do my schooling but there was a big culture clash for me. I prefer to stay in the community. We got to learn about other nations through the teachers that came in and learn other information in general. Now I'm interested in justice, so I may apply with the CRA, try to work on Section 18."

Michael Longchap of Mistissini was working at the CHBSS when the program was offered to him and he decided to try it. This despite that two years previously he had dropped out of Secondary II. "I was really lucky," he's quick to add. "The most difficult part was leaving my family behind to do the classes. It's only two weeks but it was very hard. The best part of it all was when we were in school in the bush. We stayed in teepees and got to eat traditional food, traditional cooking; it was great... As for now, I've just been





# SENTENCING PROCEDURES FOR ABORIGINAL OFFENDERS DENIES JUSTICE TO VICTIMS

By KENNY LOON

The application of s. 718.2 (e) of the *Criminal Code* has raised serious concerns about public security in Cree communities and in other First Nations communities in Canada. The main idea embodied in paragraph 718.2 (e) is that the courts should exercise restraint and consider all reasonable alternatives before imposing a sentence of incarceration (imprisonment).

In my view, this section was designed to encourage the courts to look at the alternatives where it's consistent with the protection of the public and not simply resort to the easy answer in every case. This paragraph must not be taken as a means of automatically reducing the prison sentences of aboriginal offenders nor should it be assumed that an offender is receiving a more lenient sentence because incarceration is not imposed. I believe strict conditions must be imposed on each offender before being released back into his or her community. The courts must ensure that, in each community, an alternative community-based justice must be in place and functional to deal with alternative sentencing matters. If not, releasing offenders back into the community should not be considered.

In 1996, Parliament reformed sentencing under the *Criminal Code*. In *R. v. Laliberte* [2000], the court stated that the broad rationale for the reform was to shift sentencing "away from incarceration to both a wider range of punitive and to a restorative model involving more community-based sentencing." By enacting basic principles such as a restorative approach to sentencing, Parliament effectively said that "imprisonment was to be used as a last resort."

The judiciary and parliamentarians have acknowledged that Parliament's reasons for specifically referring to Aboriginal offenders in s. 718.2 (e) was that Aboriginal peoples were and continue to be over-represented in Canada's penitentiaries. That section currently reads:

**718.2** A court that imposes a sentence shall also take into consideration the following principles:

(e) all available sanctions other than imprisonment that are reasonable in the circumstances should be considered for all offenders, *with particular attention to the circumstances of Aboriginal offenders.* (emphasis added)

To restore justice means to allow community members to live together in peace and harmony again after a conflict. Without an alternative means of dealing with dangerous offenders who are released back into First Nations communities, community members are effectively deprived of peace and security of their being. Parliament was simply not aware of these implications of, and the inconsistencies in its penal policies.



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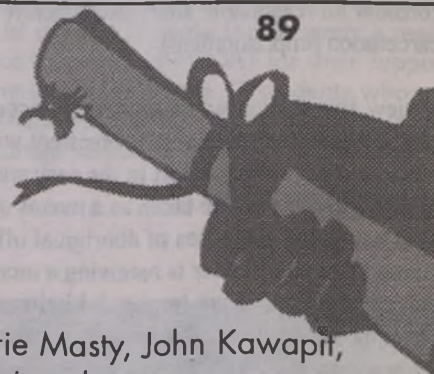


# GRADUATES OF 2002~2003

## COMMUNITY ENGLISH FRENCH TOTAL

Whapmagoostui	8		8
Chisasibi	9		9
Wemindji	11		11
Eastmain	4		4
Waskaganish	10	17	27
Nemaska	9		9
Ouje-Bougoumou	5		5
Waswanipi	6	4	10
Mistissini	3	3	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>89</b>

## ENGLISH SECTOR COMMUNITY



### Whapmagoostui

Leslie Dick, Marcella George, Paul Kawapit, Anne-Marie Masty, John Kawapit, Adrian Natachequan, **\*Elijah Sheshamush**, Diana Natachequan

### Chisasibi

Lori Chakapash, **\*Margaret Dick**, Roxanne Pelchat, Deborah Rupert, Marie Celine Charron, Catherine Washipabano, Bernadette House, Jason Pachano, Sheena Napash

### Wemindji

Loralee Atsynia, Miranda Georgekish, Lorna Visitor, Roslyn Tomatuk, Kerria Ann Hughboy, Roxanne Hughboy, Marie Eve Lariviere, **\*Andrew Biron**, Arnold Georgekish, Ashley Matches, Lawrence Ratt





### Eastmain

Minnie O'Conner, **\*Amy Mathias Zachary**, Stella-Jane Snowboy, Marilyn Cheezo

### Nemaska

Charlotte Wapachee, Claude Coonishish, Crystal Herodier, Jennifer S. Wapachee, Nigel Orr, Noreen Wapachee, Timothy Tent, Trudy Lognchap, **\*Victoria Wapachee**

### ouje-Bougoumeu

Lilybelle Bosum, **\*Dion Mianscum**, Maureen Salt, Angeline Shecapio-Blacksmith, Patricia Wapachee

### Waswanipi

Glorianna Neeposh, Venessa Otter, Erica Jane Moar Happyjack, Jamie Blacksmith, Hillary Kitchen, Amy Happyjack

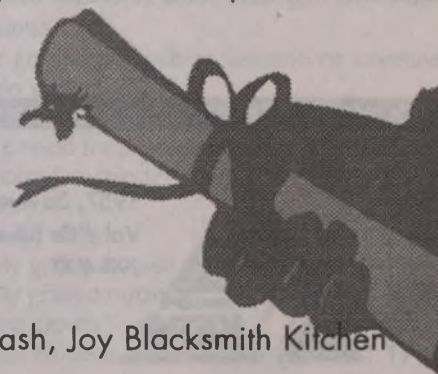
### Mistissini

Nikamoon Mitchell, Amelia Neeposh, Eunice Shecapio

### Waskaganish

Geraldine Hester, Suzanne Kapashesit, Darren Peace, Joshua Rathbone, Russell Stephen, **\*Cheryl Weistche**, Darren Weistche, Randy Weistche, Philip John Weistche, Crystal Whiskeychan

## FRENCH SECTOR COMMUNITY



### Waswanipi

**\*Patricia Trapper**, Silas Blackned, Donathan Saganash, Joy Blacksmith Kitchen

### Mistissini

Nellie Brien, Maggie Brien, **\*Sophie Shecapio**

### Waskaganish

Geraldine Blackned, Marion Cheezo, Paulette Diamond, Celine Hester, Tiffany Hester, Wally Jolly, Willy Jolly, Christina Jonah, Selina Katapatuk, Paulette Lameboy, Jordana McLeod, Crystal Moar, Nikki Namagoose, Nancy Shecapio, Daphne Trapper, Justine Whiskeychan, Henry Wischee

**\* Commissioners' Award of Excellence**

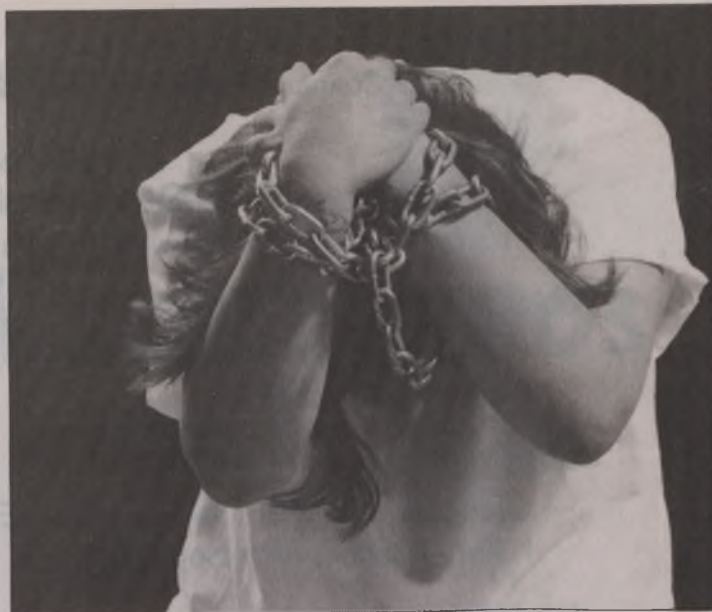




In order to alleviate the extra burden that has been placed on First Nations communities as a result of the application of s. 718.2 (e), Parliament must consider providing adequate funding to First Nations to enable them to set up alternative justice systems and to allow them to adequately deal with issues of restitution and community reintegration.

The federal government might also consider setting up more aboriginal healing lodges that would prepare aboriginal offenders for re-integration into their society through spiritual and cultural interventions. These healing lodges would help aboriginal offenders become law-abiding, productive citizens. The lodges would be built with clear visions of creating healthy communities and safe environments.

The application of this paragraph certainly has far-reaching effects. The Supreme Court of Canada first considered the implication of s. 718.2 (e) in *Gladue* [1999] and *Wells* [2000]. In *Gladue*, the Supreme Court dismissed Mrs. Gladue's appeal to have a three-year prison sentence reconsidered. However, during the course of their arguments, the court outlined the approach the Canadian judiciary should take when considering s. 718.2 (e) of the *Criminal Code*. Judges are to recognize the unique position of aboriginal offenders as people who may have come before the court because of systemic



discrimination, of which judges should take judicial notice. Further, there may be types of sentencing procedures and sanctions which are appropriate because of the offender's aboriginal heritage. While the result of such consideration may be that the jail term for an aboriginal offender is not shorter than that for a non-aboriginal for the same offence, differential sentencing is not precluded. Indeed, "the fundamental purpose of s. 718.2(e) is to treat aboriginal offenders fairly by taking into account their difference" (*Gladue*).


In the case of *Wells*, the Supreme Court considered the relationship between conditional sentencing and s. 718.2 (e). The Supreme Court held that judges should consider s. 718.2 (e) only during the third and final stage of sentencing when considering the appropriateness of a conditional sentence. This decision has been criticized because a conditional sentence is itself a form of “imprisonment” even though it may be served in the community. In ruling as it did, the Court precluded consideration of sentences not based on imprisonment (such as discharges or suspended sentences). Nonetheless, this case and *Gladue* remain the foundation cases for Canadian courts when considering s. 718.2 (e) of the *Criminal Code*.

The problem with s. 718.2 (e) is that it does not address the cause of high incarceration rates of aboriginal people. It does not attack the root cause of crime in First Nations communities. It also fails to deal with the high unemployment, substance abuse, family instability, among others.

Certain factors that a sentencing judge should consider when deciding the nature and length of sentences must relate to the culpability of the offender. They should be individual factors, not collective characteristics. Anything else denies the victims justice. The root cause of crime must be fully addressed. The rights of the victim should not be put ahead of those of the offenders. If there is no alternative community-based justice system to deal sentencing matters, the length of incarceration term must be carefully considered.

*Kenny Loon is a Cree Lawyer currently residing in Ottawa. He works for the Assembly of First Nations as Legal Advisor.*

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# Will ON THE Grill

by Will Nicholls

I'm back and there is finally room for another segment of Will on the Grill. Before I start into the recipes let me say that I am trying to make most of them as low fat or salt free as possible. If you see salt you can substitute. I do. In a past issue I recommended putting pineapple slices on skewer sticks as a substitute for Popsicles. It tastes great, is cold and kids love it. I discovered quite by accident it works well with watermelon also. I put a watermelon in the freezer to really cool it down and forgot it. I pulled it out frozen and let it thaw out for a while. After about fifteen minutes I got impatient and sliced the sucker with a sharp knife. Talk about taste and juiciness. I finished off the quarter watermelon in about half an hour. I just kept going back. A definite recommendation for one and all on a hot summer's day or night. (Hopefully Meatloaf won't come after me for that allusion.) The next Will on the Grill will be full of fish recipes for all you fishermen and women. Until then here are a few recipes for your consideration.

## Pasta Shells with Chicken, Mushrooms, Broccoli and Sun-dried Tomatoes

By the way this is a low fat meal that is healthy for you but tastes so nice. Pasta in the summer is nice because it can make a light meal. You might want to substitute the shiitake mushrooms. I know they are hard to find in some place. I would try portabella first, café second and only then on to the white ones.

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup sliced stemmed fresh shiitake mushrooms (about 2 ounces)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/8 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
- 2 cups canned low-salt chicken broth
- 8 cups coarsely chopped trimmed broccoli (about 1 large bunch)
- 2 cups medium pasta shells (about 5 ounces)
- 2 cups 3/4-inch pieces skinless roasted chicken
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced drained oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Heat oil in large deep nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add mushrooms and sauté until tender, about 4 minutes. Add garlic and crushed red pepper and stir 1 minute. Add broth and bring to boil. Stir in broccoli; cover and cook 3 minutes. Uncover and cook until broccoli is tender, stirring often, about 3 minutes longer. Season with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, cook pasta in large pot of boiling salted water until just tender but still firm to bite. Drain; return to pot. Add broccoli mixture, chicken, and sun-dried tomatoes. Stir over me-

dium heat until chicken is heated through, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to bowl; sprinkle with cheese.

## Tandoori-spiced Chicken Breasts

A great favorite of many who regularly go to Indian restaurants (The Indians from India, that is.) Tandoori chicken gets its name from the clay oven (heated by wood or coal) it is traditionally cooked in—a tandoor—which bakes meat, fish, poultry, and bread at temperatures upward of 500°F. In this version, the chicken is broiled and the yogurt and spice marinade contains readily available ingredients.

### For spice paste

- 1 large garlic clove
- 1 1/2 teaspoons coarse salt
- 1 small fresh red or green chili such as Serrano or cayenne
- 1/3 cup low-fat plain yogurt
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons grated peeled fresh gingerroot
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground coriander seeds
- 3/4 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 4 skinless boneless chicken breast halves (about 1 1/4 pounds total)
- 1 small red onion
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil

### For yogurt sauce

- 1/2 cup low-fat plain yogurt
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- a pinch cayenne

### Make spice paste:

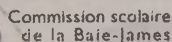
Mince garlic with salt and mash to a paste. Wearing protective gloves mince chili (including seeds for a spicier paste) and in a bowl stir together with garlic paste and remaining spice paste ingredients.

Make 3 diagonal cuts about 1/4 inch deep in each chicken breast and rub spice paste into cuts and all over chicken. Marinate chicken, covered, 30 minutes at cool room temperature.

Preheat broiler and line broiler pan with foil. Halve onion through root end and reserve 1 half for sauce. Thinly slice remaining onion half, separating layers, and in a small bowl soak onion slices in ice water to cover while broiling chicken.

Arrange chicken without crowding on rack of broiler pan. Brush chicken with 1 teaspoon vegetable oil and broil about 3 inches from heat 8 minutes. Turn chicken over and brush with remaining teaspoon vegetable oil. Broil chicken until lightly





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- ▶ Boucherie à Mistissini
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- ▶ Conduite de camions à Chibougamau
- ▶ Mécanique automobile à Wemindji
- ▶ Mécanique de véhicules légers à Waskaganish
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browned and just cooked through, about 6 minutes more.

#### **Make sauce while chicken is broiling:**

Mince enough reserved onion to measure 1 tablespoon and in a small bowl stir together with all sauce ingredients.

Drain soaked onion and pat dry between paper towels. Top chicken with onion slices and serve with yogurt sauce.

#### **Deviled Ham on Celery**

You will have about 1/4 cup deviled ham left over — you can make a few more celery hors d'oeuvres or simply put it in the fridge to serve on crackers the next day.

- 10 celery ribs, strings discarded if desired
- 1/2 lb thinly sliced (1/8-inch-thick) cooked smoked ham
- 1/4 cup minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon Sherry vinegar or cider vinegar

Trim a thin strip down length of rounded side of each celery rib to form a flat bottom, and then rest celery on flat bottom. Cut away curved edges with a large knife to form flat-sided pieces of celery, discarding trimmings. Diagonally cut celery into 32 (1 1/4-inch) lengths.

Pulse half of ham in a food processor until finely chopped, then mince remaining ham with a sharp large knife. Stir together finely chopped and minced ham with remaining ingredients and pepper to taste in a bowl, then mound 1 teaspoon of filling onto each piece of celery.

#### **Pineapple, Kiwifruit and Orange in Mint Syrup**

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves (any size) plus 2 tablespoons small leaves
- 3 navel oranges
- 1 ripe pineapple (preferably labeled "extra sweet"), peeled, cored, and cut into 3/4-inch pieces
- 4 kiwifruit, peeled and each cut into 8 wedges

Bring sugar, water, and 1 cup mint to a boil in a small saucepan, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and let steep, covered, 10 minutes.

Pour syrup through a sieve into a large serving bowl, pressing on and discarding mint, and cool syrup.

Cut peel and white pith from oranges with a sharp knife. Holding oranges over bowl of syrup to catch any juices, cut sections free from membranes, letting them fall into syrup, and squeeze membranes to extract as much juice as possible. Stir in pineapple, kiwis, and small mint leaves.

## Helpful Hints

#### **Storing your greens**

Salad greens will keep dry and crisp much longer when washed, dried, and stored in your salad spinner in the refrigerator.

Wash and dry salad greens or sandy herbs (parsley, cilantro) in a salad spinner. Roll them gently in paper towels, then dampen the towels lightly, seal them in plastic bags, and store in the refrigerator. *Greens will stay fresh this way five to seven days; herbs two to three weeks.* Store arugula and basil the same way, but do not wash until you're ready to use them. As a rule, thyme, rosemary, and sage need no washing.

If you're going to serve the lettuce fairly soon, just tuck the washed and spun-dried leaves loosely into the mixing-serving bowl and let the natural drying of the refrigerator finish the crisping.

You've got your avocados and they go brown fast. When this happens they look so yucky I just toss them. Good news though if you try this tip out. You'll get added flavor as well as protection from discoloration if you sprinkle avocado with lime juice instead of lemon juice.

#### **A little touch of difference makes your life go round**

Want to add a little zest to your life. Bury strips of lemon or orange in canisters of sugar (either granulated or confectioners') to give the sugar a delicate citrus taste. I like this one for when I make tea.

To give some zing to your soups. Drizzle balsamic vinegar into bean or vegetable soups.

Perk up white rice by adding chicken broth with a pinch of crumbled dried thyme, marjoram, rosemary, or basil in the cooking water.

If you want to get the most out of your herbs you'll find fresh parsley chopped with dried herbs freshens their flavor and aroma.

In a special pepper grinder reserved for this purpose, mix about 70 to 80 percent whole black or white peppercorns with 10 to 15 percent each of allspice and whole coriander. (Vary the proportions according to taste.) Or add a few Szechwan peppercorns, either to the mixture described or to spice up plain black peppercorns. Use these flavored peppers instead of salt on simply prepared fish or chicken.

#### **A little garlic**

Use garlic purée for a softer, richer garlic flavor in marinades and vinaigrettes. Add to mashed potatoes or to sauces in lieu of butter. Or, use as a body liniment to ease aches and pains.

For garlic-flavored potato chips, place a peeled clove in a bag of chips, seal, and let stand several hours.

When a recipe directs you to add oil, garlic, and onions to a pan, always add garlic last. This keeps it from burning.

#### **Low Fat Tricks of the Trade...**

Use fat wisely - meaning where you can taste it. When oiling a pan, instead of pouring it in, use a brush or paper towel to lightly coat the surface.

To give sautéed onions a richness, cook them until golden rather than merely translucent.

A ridged grill pan makes meat flavorful without using much fat.



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CSB ELECTIONS 2003

## CREE SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS 2003

Elections for the Office of Chairperson of the Cree School Board

### The Candidates:

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. George Blacksmith | 4. Victor S. Gilpin |
| 2. Kenny Blacksmith  | 5. Mabel Herodier   |
| 3. Rusty Cheezo      | 6. William Mianscum |

DATE OF ELECTIONS: Thursday, July 10, 2003 from 9:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M.

ADVANCE POLL: Friday, July 4, 2003 from 9:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M.

The qualifications to VOTE in the elections are set as follows:

- A. To be a Cree beneficiary of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement;
- B. To be of age of majority at the date of the elections (18 years of age or more on July 10th, 2003);
- C. Not to be affected by any legal incapacity.

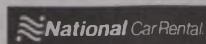
To be declared elected, a candidate must receive more than 50% of the ballots cast. Should no candidate receive more than 50% of the ballots cast, the Chief Returning Officer shall call a run-off election.

John Henry Wapachee – Chief Returning Officer  
Cree School Board



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## URBAN NATIVE

by tsa

### *First timer*

There are some times when the whole reality about being adopted jumps up into my face and says 'boo.' As I have written before, I am a native adoptee, meaning that I did not grow up in or near a native community. Through no choice of my own I grew up in a non-native community with non-native parents and non-native family.

For years I thought I was of the Ojibway nation, only to discover after meeting my biological family that I was actually of Ojibway-Cree origins. I had only done some reading and research on my Ojibway heritage so finding out I was part Cree left me wondering about that side of me too. I have been writing for the Nation now for almost a year and have learned many things on the job about the traditions and heritage of the Cree. Some of the things I learn leaves me feeling a little sad, such as realizing what I have missed out on, like the walking out ceremony. Everything else I learn makes me feel very proud and strong. It encourages me to learn more.

What I have been looking forward to for many months now is the chance to go up north into a community for the first time to meet people and experience things first hand. This finally happened to some degree a couple of weeks ago when I was assigned to cover the BSW graduates in Val d'Or. I know it was not the same as going to a Cree community but I was going to meet some people and witness an event. I was both excited and terrified.

Terrified because the last time I went to a native community, where I was born, I was going to meet my biological family. I knew people there already, but here I was going to be among complete strangers that I had never met before!

I went to it feeling very insecure and out of place, wondering how I would be accepted and treated. I still tend to feel as though those who live in their communities are 'better' than I am. When my insecurity rears its ugly head, I feel like a fraud and worry that is what everyone is thinking.

When I feel strong though, I look forward to everything that I am going to learn and all the wonderful people I am going to meet. When I feel strong I am not ashamed of my ignorance because I know that my adoption was not something I did and I know that the only way to learn is to just do it.

When I arrived in Val d'Or, it was late at night, as I had missed my plane earlier that morning and had to scramble to take a

seven hour bus ride just to get there. I arrived at the reception while everyone was seated with their families and friends, finishing off their dinners. At the front were the MC and the various speakers who were handing out gifts to the grads and delivering congratulatory speeches. I scanned the audience hoping to see a familiar face but as I had no contacts and had not met anyone in person before, there were none. So I kept to the back wondering whom to approach. I finally walked up to George Oblin (the MC) who introduced me to his wife, Caroline, who introduced me to Edith Gull, one of the graduates.

After the speeches were done, I had a chance to sit down with Mrs. Gull for over an hour and she answered all my questions and filled me in on all the wonders of the program. I sat there and looked in awe at this wonderful courageous woman. Her daughters and grandchildren came up now and then and we were all introduced and they looked at me a little curiously.

As I learned how the program worked I was just so impressed with it all, especially the students. I completed 8 years of university, so I have an idea of the trials and tribulations involved. I also have a child of my own now and leaving her for the two days it took for me to go to Val d'Or was somewhat difficult, so I can only imagine how difficult two weeks would be. All I could think about was that it was amazing that these 41 students had managed to complete a 90-credit course while working and managing a family over a seven-year period. Plus they had to leave their communities and their families four times a year in order to do it.

After speaking with Mrs. Gull, I found that my shyness and insecurity got the best of me though and I lacked the courage to simply go up to people and start talking. I sat and watched everyone around me, I took notes and looked them over, listened to the music and hoped someone would come talk with me.

All in all it was an okay experience. I was a little disappointed with my lack of courage but it hasn't gotten me down. I know that this was my first visit up north, and I realize that it was up to me how I approached the whole experience. I tend to be an observer and not much of a talker in general. I am still looking forward to the time when I will go to one of the Cree communities and experience more of the wonderful culture and just meet people. Maybe next time I'll get a handle on that shyness and insecurity.





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# Fighting fires on our own

**Xavier Kataquapit**

It looks like the start of a long hot summer this year. Many people up north are happy to see the warm weather after having to deal with a cold winter. Although many people along the James Bay coast prefer the snow and ice to the mosquitoes and black flies, the warm, sunny weather allows people more opportunities to spend time with family and friends. Unfortunately, with clear skies and a blistering sun we are also faced with danger.

My community of Attawapiskat has dealt with a few distant forest fires that burned hundreds of acres of land. We have never had a direct threat of a forest fire in the community. In the damp and water retaining muskeg the forests remain healthy and vibrant and manage to withstand most fires. It is a different story with remote northern communities west of James Bay towards the northwestern portion of Ontario. Many remote First Nation communities in this area are located amidst beautiful old forests set among rocky landscapes with sand, gravel and little protective muskeg. These communities have to deal with the danger of forest fires every year.

To protect the land and these communities, forest fire fighting companies are employed by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). This work has also provided many First Nation people with much needed employment in northern Ontario. I have several relatives in my own community who have trained and worked as forest fire fighters in the past. They have related stories of working hard in extremely difficult situations and having to do their jobs in a short period of time. When they fought fires, they were transported by canoe as closely and safely to the fire as possible and then they walked through forest, muskeg and mud in the summer heat while carrying heavy equipment to fight the fire. Their work usually began early in the morning and ran until late in the evening with little rest.

Most of the time these workers were employed by fire fighting companies for short periods of time. They worked with other seasoned forest fire fighters from nearby communities or from cities and towns down south.

Recently, several First Nation communities in northwestern Ontario banded to together to create their very own forest fire company called Aatawehike Fire Services. This company was established to deal with the seasonal danger their communities faced as well as to provide much needed employment opportunities to their members. The company is owned and operated by the eight First Nation communities of Deer Lake, Bearskin Lake, Kingfisher, Webequie, Neskantaga, Nibinamik, Aroland and Eabametoong.

In early 2002, individuals such as Bruce Visitor and Levi Sofea worked together to bring these communities into a group and develop the company. Just before the forest fire season started in the spring of 2002, the company was incorporated and soon after trained and employed numerous First Nation members from their community. The new fire services company received help in setting up from Mamo-Wichi-Hetiwin Employment & Training

to train new fire fighting crews in their communities to become qualified forest fire fighters.

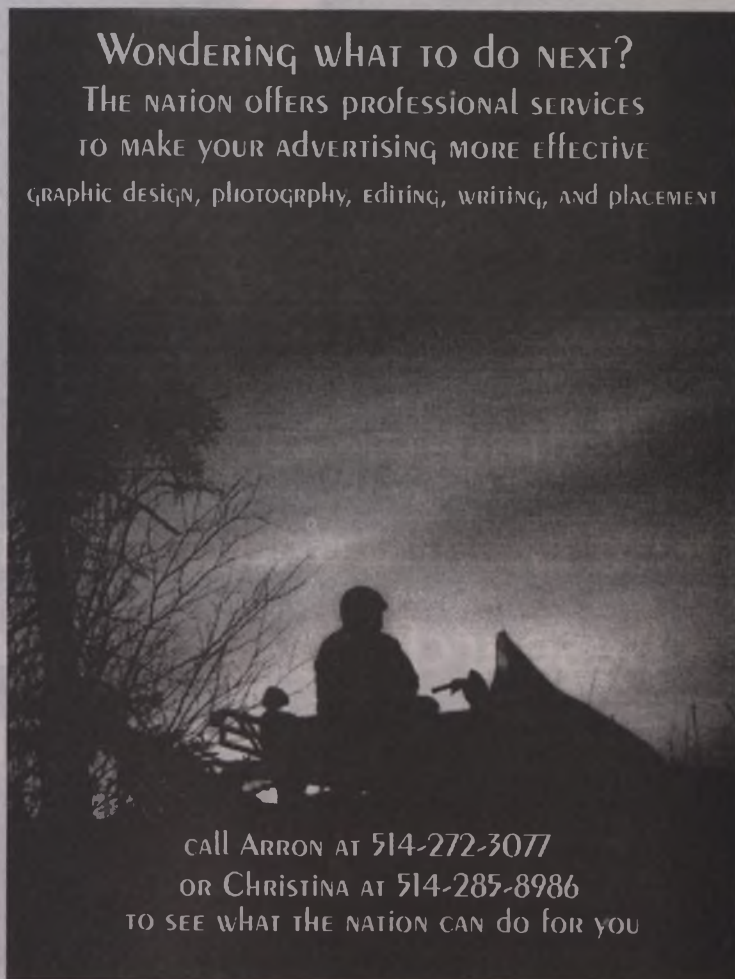
The company has also provided a cost effective solution for the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). Many First Nation people are hired through the company and this has resulted in better cost efficiency for the MNR mostly due to the fact that the First Nation fire fighters are handily based in remote locations where these fires occur frequently. Previously, outside companies were hired to transport trained fire fighters from southern cities or towns by bus or plane to these remote locations of the province at great expense to the respective company and to the MNR.

More and more I see my people taking advantage of training and employment initiatives to create opportunities for meaningful work. This happens because people like Levi and Bruce show commitment and dedication in coming up with ideas and turn them into reality. Meegwetch to them for making some dreams come true.

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## 100 - BIRTHS

**Congratulations to Annette** Atsynia of Wemindji on the safe arrival of her Baby Girl, Lilia Marie - birth weight of 5lbs 14 oz on May 7, 2003. Also: Congratulations to Colleen & Donny on birth of their Daughter Dawn. (Better late than never eh!!) Thinking of you and take care, With Love from your family in Moose Factory, Ontario

## 101 - BIRTHDAYS

**On July 4/03 is my brother's** birthday, so I decided to write him a few lines to let him know that I remember his special day. Being the little brother is probably a drag sometimes, but I hope I make it as painless as possible. Thanks for being there for me over the years. I think I know why god only gave us one brother cause you're the best brother anyone could ask for. Sending you prayers of peace, joy and happiness in the coming year. May you strive for the best and receive only better. Happy birthday Uriah- you are forever in my thoughts! Your sis, Cindy (mist)

**We'd like to wish "YO" AKA** Romeo Ernest Shecapio A Happy Birthday on June 17, 2003. "Happy Birthday to you happy birthday dear YO happy birthday to you". Enjoy your day YO and many more birthdays to come. Be a good boy and stay out of trouble. Love always: Johnny, Twyla, Lobbitsh and Hannah boojoo Coon.

**Happy Birthday to our Son** Robert-Allen Wesley Coon. Who will celebrate his B-day on June 24th. Wow son you're turning 6 years old and starting Grade one this fall. Were so proud of you. "Happy Birthday to you Lobbitsh" and many more to come. I hope you enjoyed your trip to Ottawa with grandma and grandpa and of course ur lil uncles Jacob and Ronnie Jr. oh yeah and Desh. Anyways Happy Birthday Son and We love you Sooooo much. Love always: Mom (Twyla) and Dad (Johnny) and Hannah Boojoo Coon.

**Happy 1st Birthday to our** Granddaughter Pearl Scipio on June 23, 2003 & many more Birthday's to come. We Love You Soo Much Cause You're So Small & Cuddly from: Your Grandma & Grandpa Snowboy

**We would like to say a Happy** belated Birthday to our grandson Marcus Cameron, we wish we could have been there with you on your special day and hope to see you soon. We're sure you had blast on your birthday and God bless you Marcus. With lots of love, your family back home in Wask. P.S. Call us by collect! Can't wait to hear your voice!!

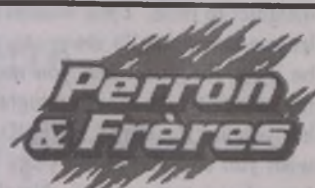
**I would like 2 send out birthday** greetings 2 a friend of mine, Rita Capassit who celebrated her birthday on June 17, first time we didnt party huh? Well, we all know why & i for one, forgive u for it..(jk) dont take it 2 da liver k? Well anyways i wish all da luck in dis world, wait a minute, i take it back, i want some of it 2 (lol) Oh yah, dont worry bout missin out on parytin on ur b-day, we'll make up 4 it, when u know....anyways Happy Belated Birthday!!! from friend: Vick (OJ) (choke choke choke!)

**I would like 2 wish a very special** person in my life, a Happy belated b-day: 2 my moms Caroline Bosum Sr. She celebrated her b-day on June 18. HAPPY BIRTHDAY MOM, love u so much, although i may not show it everyday...but deep within, u'll always b there, right next 2 pops. (whom i miss so much). Mom, what more can a I ask 4? i dont think i want anythin else more, cause u've given me a life, that which only I can live. U gave plenty of room 2 grow. Unlike any other mothers, ur unique in ur own way. U let me choose which life i wanna live, although i may have not choosen da life u would perfer, but hey ma, im livin. I love u mom, more then u can imagine. U thaught me alot over da years, & i can say i've thaught u some stuff as well. Once again Happy belated Birthday, love ya. love ur daughter, Vick fr OJ



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## CLASSIFIEDS

**Happy 2nd Birthday to my baby** Lylas Yaushtin François on June 29 2003. I wish you love and happiness on your day. I thank you for your hugs and kisses you give me everyday. It is so heart filling; you are my little angel that cheers me up when mommy is tense. You and Lance are my everything. I love those big eyes that look up at me when you need direction. How much you have grown into the little toddler that you are. Again, Happy Birthday my baby. You are today and tomorrow... I love you my son. With all my love, Mommy.

**'Happy Birthday!' to our dearest mother** Mary Asquabaneskum on June 10th. We just want you to know that we love you and we are very thankful to have you in our lives. You are a mother who never gives up on her children, no matter how old we are. You are always there when we need you. You are patient, understanding, compassionate and we can't ask for anything more. You are very precious to all of us. There is nothing on earth that's more precious than you. We hope you enjoy your day! You deserve to be happy! Love, Gracie, Charlotte, Walter, Rose, Agnes & Beatrice.

**We want to wish our Grandmother** Mary Asquabaneskum a Happy Birthday on June 10th. A grandmother is someone who gives you the tools you need to build your life on a solid foundation, the knowledge you need to use the tools successfully, the encouragement to overcome any obstacles, and the confidence to take pride in a job well done! A grandmother is a role model of excellence. It takes a special kind of person to set a course in life and follow through, no matter what hardships lie in her path. It takes a special kind of person whose faith inspires the determination of another individual and leads them in admiration. It takes a special Grandmother like you Mary! Love, Abraham, Lee Ann, Rosanna, Corey, Alexander, Carolyn & Catherina.

**Happy Belated Birthday to Lee Ann Ratt** on the 16th of June. We

hope you enjoy your day and the days that follow. We love you and you will always be in our hearts! With love, Granny Mary, Charlotte, Rose, Beatrice, Alexander, Catherina, Grandpa Frankie & Rosanna.

**This one goes out to my dearest daughter** Natasha Loon, well Tasha you will be celebrating your Sweet 16th Birthday this year on June 30th. You know what, when I look at you I think that I'm so thankful to have you in my life. I thank God for giving me a Lovely daughter to raise, I just wanted to let you know that I'll always try to be there for you when you need me, not only you are my daughter but you are my BEST FRIEND. I wish you the best in the years to come. Love your mom, Natalie xoxo

### 102 - WEDDINGS

**I would like to proudly announce** the upcoming wedding of my 'Big Sister' Annie M. Mapachee to Mr. Johnny D.J. Salt. The Special Day will be held on the 4th of July 2003 in Pikogan, QC. Congrats to both of you and may your day be filled with love, joy and happiness. From 'Little Sister' Susan.

### 104 - GRADUATIONS

**To Alexandria MacLeod -**



Congratulations on your grade six graduation at Voyageur Memorial School. We are all very proud of you and we love you. From the whole gang at 219 Varsity Place in Thunder Bay, ON.

**Congratulation to Catherine** Asquabaneskum on her Grade 6 Graduation on June 26th. We are proud of you. Way to go girl! Good luck in Secondary. We love you! From Mom, Alexander, Granny Mary, Charlotte, Rose, Rosanna & Grandpa Frankie.

### 300 - PERSONALS

**CONGRATULATIONS to team** Mistissini in capturing the Class A Coed in Nemaska on June 13-15, 2003 and to the finalists

Champion Lake. Also to Pointe Bleue capturing the Class B Coed and to the finalists Nemaska. Congratulations to our young team Champion Lake-Ospreys and Screamers, we are proud of all of you. To all the participants, see next year in June 14-16, 2004 in Nemaska. Jimbo, once an Osprey, always an Osprey.

**I would like to thank Delanna,** Ronald, Kerri-lynn, Barbara, Abraham, Juliet, Walter, Marlin, Angela and Fred Blackned. Who made it possible for my son Blake to have his walking out ceremony on June 7, 2003, words cannot express how much I appreciate all the hard work you put into this special occasion. Blake and I would also like to thank all the people that came to share his walking out ceremony. It was a beautiful day, geese flying all day, we were so blessed.

**Attention to all; do you have a** place in Montreal this coming fall and winter? Are you looking for someone to help you out? Well I am looking for someone that already has a place right now, so it could be cheaper for you. If interested, you can reach me at work from Monday through Thursday during working hours at 418.745.3366/3354 or by e-mail at bosum\_king@hotmail.com, by the way my name is Josh Bosum from Ouje.

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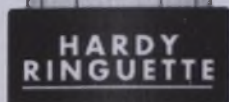
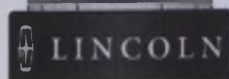
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Left to right  
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 Rangée arrière

Rangée ar  
Last row

Philip Shecapio, Roderick  
Petawabano, Wally  
Rabbitskin, Michael  
Longchap, Sinclair Neepos  
Bert Blackned, Len Taylor.

*Rangée du centre*  
*Middle row*

Judy Wesley-Capissiff,  
 Kathleen Tanush-Nepsoh,  
 Martha Sinesh-nush-  
 Wynne, Jane Sam-Cromarty,  
 Karen Napash, Lillian  
 Martinhuten-Angatooluk,  
 Winnie Mark-Saganash,  
 Charlotte Gunner-Gilpin,  
 Taria Matooosh-Coon, Gloria  
 Blackened Concome,  
 Marjorie Chewanish-  
 Mistacheeslik.

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**2003**  
**COMMENCEMENT**

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Edith Ottereyes-Gull,  
Rita Mayappo-Gilpin,  
Charlotte Cheezo-Papabano,  
Janie Pachanos, Evadney  
Neeposh-Meltaweskum.

1<sup>st</sup> rangee  
Front row  
Linda Rednose, Daisy Ratt,  
Emily Neacappo-  
Washapabano, Pauline  
Moushoom-Ekapp, Cynthia

Morrison, Florence  
Mayappo-Cheezo, Minnie  
Masty, Shirley Hester-  
Diamond, Maria Gunner-  
Macleod, Jane Blacksmith,  
Bella Blackned-Hester, Mary  
Bearskin, Sarah Bearskin-  
louttit.

**Absents**  
**Missing**  
 $\sigma \Gamma \Delta^{\circ} \Delta^{\circ}$   
Abraham Bearskin, Irene  
Bearskin-House, Laura  
Bearskin, Alice Mianscum.

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